

Report from the Secretary-General

It is a great pleasure to welcome you all to the 2012 IIC Annual General Meeting and I would like to thank Professor May Cassar, of the Centre for Sustainable Heritage at the Bartlett School of Graduate Studies here at University College London, and all those involved not only for making us welcome here in the Roberts Engineering Building, but also for arranging and contributing towards the web streaming of the Dialogue *Rising Tide/ Melting Ice: The Preservation of World Archaeological Heritage in a Time of Climate Change* taking place here this evening following the AGM. I would also like to thank our publisher, Maney Publications, for their generous help towards this event.

I will summarise the activities of the past year, July 2010 to June 2011, discussed in the Annual Report for this year. The most important event for IIC was undoubtedly the Istanbul Congress, but we have also maintained our work towards developing links with our members, with the wider conservation profession and also with the public in general. Publications will be discussed by the Director of Publications, Joyce Townsend. Some events very significant for IIC have taken place shortly after this reporting year, but do merit a brief mention.

To touch briefly on IIC Council matters. Eleanor McMillan stood down as Vice-President at the AGM in January 2011 and we would like to thank her very much for her long association with and loyalty to IIC. At the present AGM, we say our farewells to David Saunders, David Watkinson, Michael von der Goltz and Hans-Christoph von Imhoff, who have come to the end of their terms of office and are not standing again, either because they are ineligible or because the pressures of their work are too great; we are sorry to lose them and are grateful to them all. We ask a great deal of our Council members, as of all those who volunteer their services to IIC, and they give us a great deal.

Much of IIC's administrative business must take place in the UK, where the charity was set up, but not all of it. IIC is international; its Council membership reflects this as far as possible and, following a precedent set a few years ago, that one Council meeting a year should be held outside the UK, the September 2010 Council meeting, which took place immediately before the IIC Congress, was held in Istanbul, at the Sakıp Sabancı Museum, while that held in May 2011 was held in Helsinki, at the Sinebrychoff Museum, Finnish National Gallery, at the invitation of Tuulikki Kilpinen. During this meeting we were able to meet the museum conservators and later the Finnish Section of the NKF (IIC Nordic Group). This was a most useful and informative exercise as we were able to discuss how effective IIC has been and is being at maintaining contacts with this group of conservators and, indeed, how relevant IIC is to them. We would like to thank them all very much for their most generous hospitality.

Fellowship of IIC is a significant award: it indicates recognition of the contribution made by conservators and conservation scientists to the profession and to heritage conservation in general. Most importantly this is a recognition of quality internationally; a Fellow is elected by the Fellowship world-wide. It is gratifying to see the continual improvement of quality and activity in conservation, reflected in the Fellowship applications and it is a great pleasure to welcome Lorenzo Appolonia,

David Grattan, Jerzy Kunicki-Goldfinger, Salvador Muños-Viñas, Velayuhdan Nair, David Park, Marie Louise Sauerberg, Andrew Thorn and Christina Young as new Fellows of IIC, elected during 2010–11.

The highlight of the year was undoubtedly the 23rd Congress held in Istanbul, on *Conservation and the Eastern Mediterranean*. Our hosts in Istanbul were the Sakıp Sabancı Museum, with the Sakıp Sabancı University and Sabancı Holdings, and we would like to express our enormous gratitude to Nazan Ölçer, Director of the Sakıp Sabancı Museum, and her colleagues for their most generous hospitality. The stimulating technical programme reflected the ancient history and archaeology of the region and was of a high standard, thanks to the rigour of the selection process and the efforts of the Technical Committee, chaired by Sharon Cather. However, an important aspect of the Congress is the social programme as this gives delegates the chance to meet face to face and discuss matters of common interest. This is particularly important for the local conservation community. Thanks to the generosity of the Sakıp Sabancı Foundation and the Getty Foundation, eighty local Turkish conservators were able to participate fully in the Congress in a way they would not otherwise have had the chance to do. Not only was it very clear that a very enjoyable time was had by all, but also friendships were made; IIC met part of its public. We are fully aware that attending the congress requires a significant investment in both time and money from a clientele who do not have much of either, but very great benefits are gained. The degree of interest in the congress was reflected in the number of applications for grants to attend, made available from the Brommelle Memorial Fund and thanks to the generosity of the Getty Foundation, the Gabo Trust, the Clothworkers Guild and the International Trust for Croatian Monuments. The number applying was in fact far greater than the number of awards available. Applicants came from as far afield as Zimbabwe and Sri Lanka, Cambodia and Mexico and we hope to build on the relationships that have developed from this: several of these delegates have since applied for membership of IIC through the Opportunities Fund.

For the first time, a selection of student posters of gratifyingly high standard was on display during the Congress and student interest was so great, in fact, that some students expressed a desire to have their own conference in 2011. The aim was to provide a forum for students and newly qualified conservation professionals to get a better idea of what happens after the training course is finished: how to set up in business; what opportunities are open; what kind of employment is possible. The event, *Conservation: Futures and Responsibilities*, is one that took place after the 2010–11 reporting year, but it merits attention because not only was it extremely successful, but also it is of great significance for IIC: students are our future and their enthusiasm and interest is an indication of the health and relevance of the organisation. The conference was well attended in person and also web streaming enabled participants from all parts of the world to take part. I would like to congratulate the student organisers, Adam Klupś (whose idea it was), Kathleen Froyen and Marie Louise Liwanag, of University College London, and Francesca Lemass and Liz Ralph, of Camberwell College of Arts. We are also very grateful indeed to Professor Elizabeth Pye, of the Institute of Archaeology, University College London, and her colleagues for their invaluable help in organising and hosting the event; Libby Sheldon, of the History of Art Department UCL; to all those – far too many to name – who took part in the discussion sessions; and to the Samuel H. Kress

Foundation, Maney Publishing, Willard Conservation Equipment Engineers and Rotaset Printers for their generous support.

Another interesting development arising from the Istanbul Congress was the desire of conservators in Arabic-speaking countries to form a new IIC group for Arabic speakers. Articles have been drawn up and I was hoping to be able to announce that the group has formal existence. Events in the eastern Mediterranean have delayed progress considerably; this is a multinational group so its legal framework is not straightforward. The group will now be based in Egypt, not Jordan as given in the published report; we have just had a very positive report from the organisers and we are confident that the formation of the group will be confirmed very soon.

It is important to encourage the general public to recognise the importance of conservation of art objects and of national heritage in general. It is clear from the popularity of our Facebook and Twitter sites that people are interested in conservation matters and in what IIC does. We have to capitalise on this, but meanwhile we are extremely grateful to Amber Kerr-Allison for continuing to administer these social networking sites. The IIC website is another essential means of communication with the conservation community and the public; work continued throughout the year on its redevelopment. This is being done in cooperation with the University of the Arts, London, as a research project, with the generous assistance of a grant from the Getty Foundation and is being carried out by Athanasios Velios, also one of our volunteer web editors. The new site has just come on line and may not look very different, but behind the scenes it is much more stable, more flexible and more versatile. It is important to recognise how much IIC relies on its volunteer web editors Athanasios Velios and Eike Friedrich for advice and day-to-day maintenance of the website. They put in an enormous amount of work behind the scenes; their contribution is essential and we cannot thank them enough.

The World Membership scheme, whereby IIC members can contribute to the Opportunities Fund, has proved a great success, with at least one Gold member and several Silver members. Memberships for eleven institutions are currently being paid for by the Opportunities Fund as well as several individual conservators.

The series of round table discussions, *Dialogues for a New Century*, must be one of the most successful of IIC's initiatives and one which is the creation of our President, Jerry Podany. He has been responsible in organising and arranging funding for this ground-breaking series, and has also been responsible for co-ordinating volunteers to translate these transcripts into an impressive number of different languages for the web page (Project Lingua). To give an example, the discussion at the Istanbul Congress, *Between Home and History: managing the interface between preservation and development of living historic places*, was particularly appropriate for the venue and audience and was also held in the wonderful auditorium of the Seed at the Sakıp Sabancı Museum which managed to be both spacious and intimate at the same time. The topic to be discussed this evening, *Rising Tide/ Melting Ice: The Preservation of World Archaeological Heritage in a Time of Climate Change*, is a matter of great concern internationally and not only to conservators.

Finally, and also after the reporting year 2010–11, you will have noticed that, after many years, IIC has moved its office. Our landlords are the Institution of Mechanical

Engineers in Westminster, who themselves run an interesting range of conservation projects in the mechanical engineering field. We look forward to the possibilities of an interesting partnership in the future.

This has been an extremely busy year. As always, we owe a huge vote of thanks to IIC Executive Secretary Graham Voce for his tireless work on behalf of IIC, ably assisted by Valerie Compton Taylor and, for administrative work during the transfer to the new publisher of *Studies in Conservation*, Maney Publications, and David Compton Taylor.

Jo Kirby Atkinson. IIC Secretary-General